

# An Analysis of Figurative Language Used By Adele And Taylor Swift's Selected Song

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses to analyze of figurative language in the song albums of Adele and Taylor Swift's.. The writers propose two statements of problem those are; what are figurative languages in Adele and Taylor Swift's song, and what is the dominant form of figurative language used by Adele and Taylor Swift. The writer uses qualitative method in this research. Finally, the writer found 23 figurative languages from Adele's song and 22 figurative languages from Taylor Swift song. They are metaphor, personification, simile, hyperbole, paradox, irony, symbol and synecdoche. The dominant form of figurative language by Adele and Taylor Swift is Personification that belongs to comparative figurative language.

**Keywords:** Figurative Language, song, Adele & Taylor Swift

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every time you describe something by comparing it to another, you use figurative language. Figurative language is the use of words, phrases, symbols and ideas in such a way as to generate mental images and impression impressions [1]. Figurative language is often characterized by figurative uses, complicated expressions, sound devices, and syntactic departures from the usual literal language sequence. Along with the times, as now, language also experiences growth in its use, if we know that the style of language is only used in making poetry, short stories or poetry, even in songs.

According to Lazar [2] in her book entitled "Meanings and Metaphors", figurative language is an expression or words which has metaphorical meaning. The meaning is not literally with the dictionary. There are many types of figurative language that usually used by the writers of song. The kinds of figurative language such as: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole. According to Kennedy [3] "Figurative language consists of comparative, contradictive and correlative". In comparative figurative language consists of metaphor, personification and simile. Contradictive figurative language consists of hyperbole, irony and paradox. The last is correlative figurative language consists of symbol, metonymy and synecdoche.

### Comparative;

- Metaphor is a statement that one thing is something else, For example: "Oh, my love is red, red rose." That example compares *love* with *red*. *Red* means "brave". So, love is brave. Brave to face the problem and any obstacle to get love. The comparison not use like, similar to or such as.
- Personification is kinds of figurative language which animal, thing or abstract term is like human being. For example: The stars dance in the sky. That example gives human attribute "dance" to "the stars". In the fact, dance only can be done by human. Stars don't have soul, so it cannot do "dance" like human.
- Simile is comparison of two things that are considered same, but actually it is totally appears different. For example: Your face is like moon light. From that example, *face* is compared by *moon light*. Two things that different, but it has same explicit content. Both of them represent something that clear, clean and everyone can look it clearly.

### Contradictive;

- Hyperbole is kind of figurative language which contain exaggeration element about something [4] For example: I already told you the question *a million times*. It is impossible to person to tell a question *a million times*. It is an exaggeration expression to show the fact that the person already told the question many times.

- b. Paradox is a real contradiction which is nevertheless true [5]. For example: there is a *life* after *death*. *Life* and *death* is contradictive. This sentence describes there is a life after die. It still has not evidence, but many people believe that it true.
- c. irony is the opposite of the ones means. It means that the statement that state by certain person is not the real meaning. The statement is contradictive with the real meaning. For example: I have good news for you, you got E for your math score. That sentence is irony. Real good score is A or B, but in the example, the speaker says that he has good news, but the score is E. It means he has a bad news.

**Correlative:**

- a. Symbol is a certain sign that point to a meaning beyond itself [6]. From several definition of symbol by some experts, the writer states that symbol is a kind of figurative language which uses to represent other meaning, although the word already has literal meaning. For example: "A rose" Rose has its own meaning. But, rose in that example represent love or romantic.
- b. Metonymy is a kind of figurative language that consist name of thing which is replaced by other word that closely related with it [7]. For example: "Anisa likes to read Habiburrahman".  
Habiburrahman in this example is not kind of book or article, but Habiburrahman is a writer of book. So, it means that Anisa likes to read book which is written by Habiburrahman.
- c. synecdoche is figurative language that uses a part of something to describe whole[5]. Synecdoche is like with metaphor, it represents the whole of metaphor. For example: "Lend me your ears". The meaning of the example is not the real ears that want to lend, but it just represents the attention of the people. The meaning is "give me your attention".

The research conducted by Jannah [8] with title "The Figure Of Speech In Ed Sheereen's Selected Song". She discusses about what is figurative language that contain in Ed Sheereen's selected song. From that previous research, the writers know that figurative language can be found in song. That is why the writers interest to analyze figurative language in song. Song is a composition made up of lyrics and music, with the intent of the lyrics being sung [9]. The purpose is for produce a feeling or emotion in relation to a particular matter. Other definition of song also takes from Oxford dictionary, means that song is a short poem or other set of words set to music or meant to be sung. That is a reason why the writers use songs as the object of analysis.

In this research the writers focuse to investigate about types of figurative language and compare figurative language used between two singers in their songs. the writers choose Adele and Taylor Swift's song to be analyzed. The writers choose Adele and Taylor Swift's song because those singers are very popular. Based on the description above, this paper will discuss about figurative language that use in Adele and Taylor Swift's selected song from their latest album. Besides, this paper also discusses about the comparison between figurative language that mostly used by Adele and also Taylor Swift.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

To analyse the data of figurative language in the Adele and Taylor Swift's Song the writers use qualitative method. The writers use all the song from the latest album of two famous singers from different country. They are Adele and Taylor Swift. The song from Adele's latest album are Hello, Send My Love (To Your New lover), I Miss You, When We Were Young, Remedy, Water under the Bridge, River Lea, Love in the Dark, Millions Years Ago, All I Ask and Sweetest Devotion. The song from Taylor Swift's latest album are Welcome to New York, Blank Space, Style, Out of the Woods, All You Had to Do was Stay, Shake It Off, I Wish You Would, Bad Blood, Wildest Dreams, How You Get the Girl, This Love, I Know Places and Clean.

According to Creswell [10], "qualitative writers collect the data by themselves through examining document, observing behavior and interviewing participants". It means that, the main instrument of this study is the writers because the writers active in process of collecting and analyzing the data.

In collecting data, the writers use an observation. The observation in this study focuses on figurative language in the song. There are several steps as procedure to collect the data such as; listen the song from Adele and Taylor Swift for several times, transcribe the lyrics of the song in the paper, then the writers read the lyrics of the songs clearly. Finally, the writers wrote the word, sentence or phrase which indicate figurative language in the column below:

NO	WORD, PHRASE OR SENTENCE	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
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1		
2		
3		

After collecting data, the writers analyze the data to answer the statement of problems. The steps of data analysis are; listen the song from Adele and Taylor Swift several times, the writers read the song lyrics carefully, classify the data according to the theory by Kennedy, after that the writers compare the figurative language that found from Adele and Taylor Swift's song. Finally, the writers conclude the data.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer presents the data of figurative language from Adele and Taylor Swift song. The song is taken from their latest album. Analysis of the figurative language uses the theory from Kennedy which has been explained before.

#### Figurative language found from Adele's song and Taylor Swift's song

##### 1. Adele's song

###### a. Title "Hello"

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	They say that time's supposed to heal ya	Personification (comparative)
2	The world fell at our feet	Personification (comparative)
3	And a million miles	Hyperbole (contradictive)
4	I've must called a thousand times	Hyperbole (contradictive)

###### b. Title "I miss you"

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	I want your heaven and your oceans too	Hyperbole (contradictive)
2	Treat me soft but touch me cruel	Irony (contradictive)
3	It illuminates all of my doubt	Symbol (correlative)
4	Don't let go, baby give me light	Symbol (correlative)
5	I miss you when the light go out	Symbol (correlative)

###### c. Title "When we were young"

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	You're like a dream come true	Simile (comparative)
2	You look like a movie	Simile (comparative)
3	You sound like a song	Simile (comparative)

###### d. Title "Remedy"

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE

	SENTENCES	LANGUAGE
1	My heart it came to life	Personification (comparative)
2	But when the pain cuts you deep	Personification (comparative)
3	When the world seems so cruel	Personification (comparative)

**e. Title “River Lea”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	But my heart is a valley	Simile (comparative)
2	When I was a child I grew up by the River Lea	Personification (comparative)
3	Oh I can't go back, but the reeds are growing out of my fingertips	Hyperbole (contradictive)
4	So I blame it on the River Lea	Personification (comparative)

**f. Title “Sweetest Devotion”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	That tears down my walls	Symbols (correlative)
2	The sweetest devotion hitting me like an explosion	Personification (comparative)
3	I've been frozen	Hyperbole (contradictive)
4	And you're my hope, you're my despair	Metaphor (comparative)

**2. Taylor Swift's song**
**a. Title “Welcome to New York”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	Welcome to New York, It's been waiting for you	Personification (comparative)
2	Took our broke heart	Hyperbole (contradictive)
3	It keeps you guessing	Personification (comparative)
4	It drives you crazy	Personification

		(comparative)
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**b. Title “Blank Space”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	Magic, madness, heaven, sin	Symbol (correlative)
2	You look like my next mistake	Simile (comparative)
3	Love's a game, want to play?	Metaphor (comparative)
4	New money, suit & tie	Symbol (correlative)
5	I can read you like a magazine	Simile (comparative)
6	I can make all the tables turn	Synecdoche (correlative)
7	I'm a nightmare dressed like a daydream	Simile (comparative)

**c. Title “Out of the woods”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	The rest of the world was black and white	Paradox (contradictive)
2	But we are in screaming color	Symbol (correlative)
3	But when the sun came	Personification (comparative)

**d. Title “I wish you would”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	Headlights pass the window pane	Personification (comparative)
2	You always knew how to push my buttons	Symbol (correlative)
3	We were a crooked love	Symbol (correlative)

**e. Title “Wildest dream”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	I thought heaven can't help me now	Personification (comparative)
2	He's so tall, and handsome as hell	Simile (comparative)

3	I bet these memories hunt you around	Personification (comparative)
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**f. Title “I know places”**

NO	WORD, PHRASES OR SENTENCES	KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
1	Love's a fragile little flame, it could burn out	Metaphor (comparative)
2	And you're dead at night, your eyes so grey	Metaphor (comparative)

According to the analysis of data above, the writers analyze the kinds of figurative language used by Adele and Taylor Swift in their latest album. Album “25” is the latest album of Adele and album “1989” is the newest album of Taylor Swift. The writers analyze six songs of each album. Those song are Hello, I miss you, when we were young, Remedy, River lea and sweetest devotion from Adele’s album. From Taylor swift’s album, the songs are Welcome to New York, Blank space, Out of the woods, I wish you would, wildest dream, I know places. There are three categories of figurative language that writers found in those albums. Each category has three kinds of figurative language. The categories of figurative language are Comparative figurative language that contains metaphor, personification and simile. The second is contradictive figurative language which contains hyperbole, paradox and irony. The last is correlative figurative language. It contains symbol, metonymy and synecdoche.

From then findings above, Adele mostly uses comparative figurative language. There are thirteen comparative figurative languages that divide into eight kind of personification, one kind of metaphor and four kind of simile. In Taylor Swift’s song, the most figurative language that she uses is comparative figurative language. There are three kind of metaphor, seven kind of personification and four kind of simile.

Related to findings from previous research, the findings of this research not only found kinds of figurative in the song, but also compare the figurative language that mostly use from two singers. Jannah [8] in her thesis analyzed about kind of figurative language in Ed Sheeren’s songs. She also analyzed about the meaning and the most figurative that song writer used. But, she did not compare with other songwriter. Ramadhan [11] analyzed about kind of figurative language and social context in Coldplay’s song. Hence, Suryatini [12] also analyzed about what figurative language contained in Harris Jung’s song is.

**4. CONCLUSION**

The findings show that the lyrics in a song not only provide words and tones that are pleasant to hear by people, but also shows an art that is certainly for literary and linguistic researchers. Thus the society know the purpose of a lyric in a song. If in this study only focus on knowing the type of figurative language and the comparison of its use between two singers, then for further research can be developed again to analyze the meaning and message of a song, of course with the latest references.

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